

2 FAM 1150 FORMS MANAGEMENT

(CT:GEN-368; 03-01-2010)
(Office of Origin: A/GIS/DIR)

2 FAM 1151 POLICIES AND AUTHORITIES

2 FAM 1151.1 Policy, Scope, and Applicability

(CT:GEN-368; 03-01-2010)
(State Only)

- a. The Department of State's centralized forms program provides customers worldwide with standardized electronic forms that meet all legal requirements. The Office of Directives Management (*A/GIS/DIR*) is the manager of the Department's official forms. Official Department forms include any form used outside a single office. All official Department forms, used domestically or at post, must be approved and processed through *A/GIS/DIR*.
- b. These policies apply to all new, revised, and existing official forms (electronic or paper) owned by the Department of State.
- c. All Department forms will be available in electronic format to the maximum extent possible. With the exception of controlled forms, forms must be designed to allow both online completion and electronic submission.

2 FAM 1151.2 Definitions

(CT:GEN-368; 03-01-2010)
(State Only)

Automated: Electronic; includes applications that automatically enter information from or to a database. This would include HTML or similar versions.

Department unit: Any organizational unit of the Department of State, including posts.

Controlled form: Form that carries a watermark (paper) or an individual

number (paper and/or electronic versions). Program offices maintain control over these forms' inventory and access as applicable.

Forms: Documents, including form letters, postcards, and memoranda, printed or otherwise reproduced, with fixed captions and spaces designed for entering and extracting prescribed information. This includes printed or electronic forms (including application-generated or Web-based screens) that are used for manual entry, as well as forms used for office automation to capture or produce information. Certain printed items without fill-in space, such as contract provisions, instruction sheets, notices, certificates, tags, labels, and posters, may be considered as forms when it is advantageous to manage and control them as recurring instruments in conjunction with the objectives of the forms management program.

Information collection: Forms that collect information from the public, or impose a record keeping, reporting, or third-party information dissemination burden to the public may be considered to be "information collections" as defined by the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995. If the PRA applies, *A/GIS/DIR* must obtain the approval of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) before anyone can use the form. (See 2 FAM 1160 for the complete definition and applicability of the PRA.)

Originating office: The office that requests the development, creation, revision, or elimination of a form.

Program office: The office that manages the form and the uses of the information.

Public-use forms: Documents used by members of the public to submit information to the Department. Public-use forms are defined as "information collections" under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) (see definition above). You must obtain approval from OMB before using such forms. *A/GIS/DIR* manages the OMB approval process. (See 2 FAM 1160.)

Service-level agreement (SLA): Form DS-1855, Request for Approval and Development of a Form, contains a service-level agreement (SLA), that spells out the information that program offices must provide for DIR to create or change a form. It includes the responsibilities and guarantees of action by both the program office and DIR.

Worldwide: A Department activity carried out both domestically and abroad.

2 FAM 1151.3 Authorities

(CT:GEN-347; 10-08-2008)

(State Only)

- a. Title 44 U.S.C., Chapters 21, 29, 31, and 33, outlines statutory requirements for managing the creation, maintenance, and use of records in Federal agencies. Included in these requirements is the forms management used by Federal agencies. The General Services Administration (GSA) is assigned the responsibility for issuing Federal regulations and conducting oversight of agency implementation of regulations regarding forms.
- b. Rules contained in 41 CFR Part 102-194, issued by GSA, contain policies, requirements, responsibilities, and guidelines for managing, administering, and implementing forms management programs in Federal agencies. These policies and requirements are implemented for the Department of State by this subchapter.
- c. The Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1980, as amended, 44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq., had as its purpose minimizing the paperwork burden on individuals, small businesses, and others resulting from collections of information by the Federal Government. The PRA instituted the concept of information resources management for all Federal information records through an integrated program encompassing all aspects of information, including the creation and use of forms, to collect data and information from the public.
- d. The Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. Sec. 552a, as amended) requires that forms used to collect personal information from individuals must contain a Privacy Act statement that identifies legal authorities, purposes for collecting the information, and the anticipated uses of the information. The Privacy Act prohibits an agency from denying an individual any right, benefit, or privilege provided by law for refusing to disclose her or his social security number (SSN), unless disclosure is required by Federal statute or by other laws effective prior to January 1, 1975. The agency must inform the individual whether the disclosure is mandatory or voluntary, what statutory or other authority solicits such number, and how it will be used.
- e. The Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA) of 1998 (Public Law 105-277, Title XVII, Sections 1701 et seq.) requires that Federal agencies allow individuals or entities that deal with agencies the option to submit or transact information electronically with the agency and to maintain records electronically, when practicable. The act also states that

electronic records and their related electronic signatures, when submitted or maintained in accordance with procedures developed under Title XVII, are not to be denied legal effect, validity, or enforceability because they are in electronic form.

- f. The Regulatory Flexibility Act of September 19, 1980 (RFA), 5 U.S.C. 601 et seq., requires Federal agencies to consider the impact of regulatory proposals on small entities and to determine, in good faith, whether there were equally effective alternatives that would make the regulatory burden on small business more equitable.
- g. The Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act (SBREFA) of March 1996, Title II of Public Law 104-121, Sections 201 et seq., designed to strengthen the RFA, mandates, among other things, that each Federal agency establish a policy or program that assists small businesses with regulatory compliance and, if appropriate, mitigates civil penalties for violations of a statutory or regulatory requirement by a small entity.
- h. The E-Government Act of 2002, 107 Public Law 347, requires Federal agencies to develop citizen and productivity-related performance measures for use of E-Government and IT in meeting the Department's objectives, strategic goals, and statutory mandates.
- i. Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794d, as amended) requires Federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities. The law applies to all Federal agencies when they develop, procure, maintain, or use electronic and information technology. Under Section 508, agencies must give disabled employees and members of the public access to information that is comparable to the access available to others.

2 FAM 1152 FORMS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

2 FAM 1152.1 Forms Program Standards

(CT:GEN-368; 03-01-2010)
(State Only)

- a. Department offices must not develop, use, or require forms that do not have proper clearance or approval. Prior to issuance or use, all forms must be approved by the Department's Forms Management Officer in the Office of Directives Management (*A/GIS/DIR*).

- b. Required forms usually have corresponding citations in the Department's Foreign Affairs Manual and Foreign Affairs Handbooks. The correct format for citing forms in the FAM/FAH is "Form DS-[0000], [Title]."
- c. Write forms in plain language and active voice.
- d. All forms must meet the Department design standards. The standards govern the arrangement of items in a format that provides for:
 - (1) Easy data entry and retrieval;
 - (2) Meeting and filing requirements;
 - (3) Specifications for form size, typefaces, construction, paper, etc.; and
 - (4) Application integration.
- e. Forms that request personal information must contain a Privacy Act statement (see 2 FAM 1154.3).
- f. All public-use forms must contain a Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) statement and display a valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number.
- g. Forms serve several purposes such as:
 - (1) Front end to data collection; and
 - (2) Facilitates an end-to-end process (e.g., awards form, training request form).
- h. Design forms to allow both online completion and electronic submission to the greatest extent possible. Forms must be available in electronic versions whenever possible.
- i. *A/GIS/DIR* performs an annual forms review for need, effectiveness, and economy.

2 FAM 1152.2 Objectives

(CT:GEN-338; 10-10-2007)
(State Only)

- a. Reduce unnecessary effort and costs imposed on those who must complete forms.

- b. Ensure that forms comply with applicable statutes and regulations, including the Privacy Act (PA), the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA), the Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA), and the E-Gov Act, and are necessary to carry out agency responsibilities.
- c. Minimize burdens by eliminating unnecessary redundancies through the use of precompleted turnaround documents, sharing of information between offices, or the use of electronic forms.
- d. Monitor information requirements and determine when revisions and changes to forms are needed.
- e. Maintain a forms inventory and background documentation on requirements and approvals.
- f. Coordinate the clearance and approval of new forms and revisions within the Department and with appropriate agencies, as applicable.
- g. Provide clear and adequate instructions for the accurate completion and submission of information.
- h. Design forms and other collection instruments that are simple and relatively easy to complete; provide modular designs that meet requirements and facilitate manual, typed, or automated completion.
- i. Minimize printing costs by using standard paper sizes and weights.
- j. Ensure that internal forms are available electronically on the intranet and classnet.

2 FAM 1152.3 Review and Clearance for Small Business Forms

(CT:GEN-338; 10-10-2007)
(State Only)

Any bureau that develops, requires, or uses a form that involves the business community must consider the form's potential effect(s) on small businesses. To that end, any form that involves or otherwise affects the business community must have the following reviews and clearances:

- (1) The Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (A/SDBU);
- (2) The Office of Commercial and Business Affairs (EEB/CBA); and

- (3) The Bureau of Information Resource Management (IRM/AP/IAP/PL).

2 FAM 1153 RESPONSIBILITIES

2 FAM 1153.1 Office of Directives Management (A/GIS/DIR)

(CT:GEN-368; 03-01-2010)
(State Only)

- a. The Department's form management officer, located in the Office of Directives Management (*A/GIS/DIR*), administers the Forms Management Program for the Department. *A/GIS/DIR*:
- (1) Establishes standards and guidelines;
 - (2) Provides design and technical assistance;
 - (3) Manages forms development;
 - (4) Assists in identifying necessary clearances;
 - (5) Ensures compliance with section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act;
 - (6) Approves forms for use and assigns form numbers; and
 - (7) Determines the validity and certifies the current approved version of any Department form.
- b. *A/GIS/DIR* reviews any proposed forms or changes to existing forms to ensure achievement of the program policies and objectives stated in this subchapter.
- c. *A/GIS/DIR* liaises with:
- (1) The General Services Administration (GSA) on Department of State-originated Standard (SF) and Optional (OF) forms;
 - (2) Other agencies on matters involving data/information collection and forms, including coordination of the Department's views on interagency studies affecting Joint (JF) and Standard forms; and
 - (3) Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to obtain approval for public-use forms and other information collections under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA).

- d. Maintains the official list and inventory (master copies) of Department forms.

2 FAM 1153.2 How to Create a New Form or Revise an Existing Form

(CT:GEN-368; 03-01-2010)
(State Only)

Bureaus or offices seeking to create a new form or modify an existing form are responsible for:

- (1) Submitting Form DS-1855, Request for Approval and Development of a Form, to *A/GIS/DIR*;
- (2) Consulting with *A/GIS/DIR* prior to the formal submission or use of a form;
- (3) Consulting with *A/GIS/DIR* prior to creating a Web-based application;
- (4) Meeting documentary requirements for creation, development, design, and approval review;
- (5) Taking advantage of or modifying existing forms to accomplish their mission; and
- (6) Obtaining necessary clearances (see 2 FAM 1152.3, 2 FAM 1154.2, and 2 FAM 1154.3-2, for some specific clearance requirements).

2 FAM 1153.3 Posts

(CT:GEN-368; 03-01-2010)
(State Only)

- a. When posts need to create a new form or modify an existing form, the process is the same as in 2 FAM 1153.2, including the need for *A/GIS/DIR* review, development, design, and approval.
- b. Principal officers at posts abroad are responsible for implementing the standards and procedures prescribed in these regulations. Managerial review and controls will ensure that posts have the necessary supply of forms to conduct both internal and public business, and that posts are not burdened with duplicative or unnecessary forms.
- c. Standardize forms where possible so that other posts may use them.

2 FAM 1154 FORMS SERIES

2 FAM 1154.1 Determining Form Series

(CT:GEN-368; 03-01-2010008)
(State Only)

All Department of State forms are assigned numbers in one of the following series:

- (1) **DS**—Permanent internal forms used by the Department and the Foreign Service;
- (2) **DSP**—Older public-use forms. This series is not being expanded;
- (3) **FS**—Forms used only by Foreign Service personnel;
- (4) **JF**—Joint forms originated and used by two or more U.S. Government agencies;
- (5) **OF**—Optional forms that originate in a U.S. Government agency and are approved by the General Services Administration (GSA) for use by other agencies. These forms may or may not be stocked and distributed by the General Services Administration (GSA); and
- (6) **SF**—Standard forms that originate in a U.S. Government agency and are approved through GSA. These forms must be used; alternate versions are not permissible.

NOTE: The forms management officer in *A/GIS/DIR* may assign additional form series to meet specific program needs.

2 FAM 1154.2 Public-Use Forms

(CT:GEN-368; 03-01-2010)
(State Only)

- a. **You must obtain OMB approval before using public-use forms** (as defined in 2 FAM 1151.2) in order to comply with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA). *A/GIS/DIR* manages the Department's PRA compliance program, including obtaining Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval.
- b. It is important to note that OMB approvals are valid for only 3 years and must be renewed in order to continue using a public-use form. Without a current OMB approval, the form cannot be used or the information

collected. (See paragraphs a and b of this section and 2 FAM 1160.)

- c. The OMB approval process (including renewals) can take 6-12 months to complete, so requesting offices need to plan accordingly. (See 2 FAM 1160 for regulations pertaining to obtaining OMB approval.)

2 FAM 1154.3 Privacy Act Statements on Department of State Forms

(CT:GEN-347; 10-08-2008)
(State Only)

You must include a Privacy Act Statement on a Department of State form that collects personal information from an individual (a U.S. citizen or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence) if:

- (1) The information collected contains the individual's name or an identifying number, symbol, or other identifying particular assigned to the individual, such as a fingerprint, voiceprint, or photograph; or
- (2) The form includes information about an individual that the Department maintains, including, but not limited to, education, financial transactions, or medical, criminal, or employment history. This also includes personal information for use in a personnel record of the individual to be used for personnel management programs or processes such as staffing, employee development, retirement, grievances, and appeals.

2 FAM 1154.3-1 Privacy Act Statement Requirements

(CT:GEN-338; 10-10-2007)
(State Only)

- a. All forms that solicit personal information from an individual must have a Privacy Act statement containing the following information:
 - (1) The statute or Executive Order (E.O.) that authorizes the collection of the information or the general requirement or authority for maintaining the system in which the information will reside;
 - (2) The principal purpose or purposes for which the information is intended to be used, as authorized through statute or E.O.;
 - (3) The routine uses and "routine users" of the information; i.e., to

whom the information is disclosed outside the Department of State;
and

- (4) The consequences, if any, to the individual for not providing part or all of the requested information.
- b. In addition, all forms that solicit an individual's social security number (SSN) must also include a statement informing the individual of the following:
- (1) Whether disclosure is mandatory or voluntary;
 - (2) By what statutory or other authority such number is solicited; and
 - (3) What uses will be made of it.
- c. These statements must be attached to the relevant form, either as part of the form or its instructions. They must be clear and precise, leaving the individual with no doubt regarding the authority, purpose, use, etc., for the collection of the information.

2 FAM 1154.3-2 Privacy Act Clearance Requirements

(CT:GEN-368; 03-01-2010)
(State Only)

All forms meeting the criteria in this section must be cleared by the Information and Privacy Staff (A/GIS/IPS) before the Office of Directives Management (*A/GIS/DIR*) can approve them. The staff will ensure that a Privacy Act statement containing the items outlined above accompanies the form and that it solicits only information that is both relevant and necessary to accomplish a State Department function.

2 FAM 1154.4 Section 508 Requirements

(CT:GEN-338; 10-10-2007)
(State Only)

All Department forms in electronic version must meet the requirements of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. All such forms must be readily accessible and usable by visually- or hearing-impaired persons. Contact the Department's forms management officer in the Office of Directives Management (*A/GIS/DIR*) for additional guidance.

2 FAM 1155 PROCEDURES

2 FAM 1155.1 Starting the Forms Process

(CT:GEN-368; 03-01-2010)
(State Only)

- a. The following steps must be followed by program offices when developing or revising a form:
 - (1) Provide a Form DS-1855, Request for Approval and Development of a Form, containing a statement of the purpose of the form and how it and the information it collects will be used. Complete and sign the service-level agreement (SLA) on the reverse of the form; *and*
 - (2) Consult with *A/GIS/DIR* to ensure that:
 - (a) There is no existing version of the form (or the information sought, or purpose);
 - (b) Reestablishment of a previously discontinued form will not suffice; and
 - (c) No form exists that could be revised for the new use.
- b. Communicate forms design requirements to the forms management officer in the Office of Directives Management (*A/GIS/DIR*) as soon as the need is identified. Effective and timely coordination enables *A/GIS/DIR* to provide guidance and constructive assistance in advance of final design and operational commitments.
- c. Contact the forms management officer in *A/GIS/DIR* for help in determining whether the form is subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) and for guidance on submitting the necessary documentation (see 2 FAM 1154.2 and 2 FAM 1160). Please note that the OMB approval process is separate from, but related to, the form development process. The form design must be completed before DIR can submit the approval package to OMB. *A/GIS/DIR* may require additional information to meet PRA or other statutory reporting requirements.
- d. See *A/GIS/DIR's* intranet Web site for a listing of all current Department forms.

2 FAM 1155.2 Related Directives

(CT:GEN-338; 10-10-2007)
(State Only)

In most cases, forms will be referenced in the Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) or the related Foreign Affairs Handbook series (FAHs), and the applicable directives will require changes to include new or revised instructions. Originating offices must ensure that FAM/FAH references are in place and accurate at the time the form is available for use.

2 FAM 1155.3 Use Certification

(CT:GEN-368; 03-01-2010)
(State Only)

Each form must go through a testing process managed by the Office of Directives Management ([A/GIS/DIR](#)), which will include program office testing and verification.

2 FAM 1156 FORMS AVAILABILITY

(CT:GEN-368; 03-01-2010)
(State Only)

The Office of Directives Management provides access to Department forms and other forms used by the Department and its posts on the [A/GIS/DIR](#) Web site. Each program office manages the distribution of its controlled forms.

2 FAM 1156.1 Forms Inventory

(CT:GEN-368; 03-01-2010)
(State Only)

The Office of Directives Management ([A/GIS/DIR](#)) maintains the official list and inventory of Department forms

2 FAM 1156.2 Electronic Versions

(CT:GEN-338; 10-10-2007)
(State Only)

All Department forms will be available electronically, to the greatest extent

possible. This includes the Internet and the Department's internal networks.

2 FAM 1156.3 Printing and Stocking Paper Forms

(CT:GEN-368; 03-01-2010)

(State Only)

- a. See 2 FAM 1156.4 for information on reprinting existing forms.
- b. Program offices stock, maintain, and distribute controlled forms. *A/GIS/DIR*, in conjunction with GSA, manages the stocking of OF- and SF- series forms.
- c. When it is necessary to send an initial supply of new forms to posts, the program office pays for printing and arranges for distribution. After initial distribution, the program office is responsible for supplying posts and offices with additional copies.
- d. The program office, in coordination with *A/GIS/DIR*, notifies posts and offices of the introduction of a new or replacement form, instructions for obtaining a supply of the form, and disposition of obsolete forms.

2 FAM 1156.4 Reprinting Existing Forms

(CT:GEN-368; 03-01-2010)

(State Only)

Use Form DS-5, Requisition for Publishing, Reproduction, and Distribution Services, to reorder printed versions of existing forms. Forward all requests to Global Publishing Solutions (*A/GIS/GPS*).

2 FAM 1157 DISCONTINUING FORMS

(CT:GEN-368; 03-01-2010)

(State Only)

Program offices must review their forms periodically and discontinue those forms that are no longer needed. When a review indicates that a form should be discontinued, notify the Office of Directives Management (*A/GIS/DIR*) at eforms@state.gov.

2 FAM 1158 AND 1159 UNASSIGNED